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BLANCHARD SPRINGS CAVERNS

... A PREVIEW

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1967

Special Copy

ED CLIFF



VISITORS' INFORMATION BUILDING
BLANCHARD SPRINGS CAVERNS

SYLAMORE RANGER DISTRICT
OZARK NATIONAL FOREST, ARKANSAS
FOREST SERVICE

ROBINSON & WASSELL
ALABAMA ARCHITECTS

OZARK - ST. FRANCIS NATIONAL FORESTS

United States
Department of
Agriculture

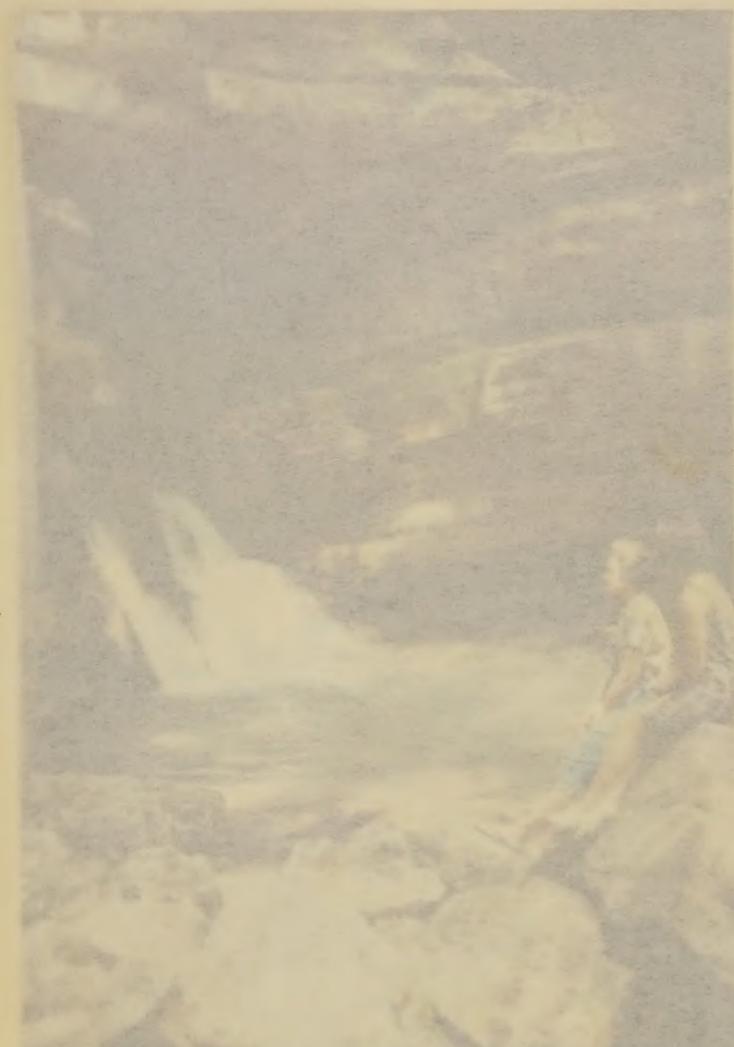


National Agricultural Library

Blanchard Springs Caverns are located in the Ozark National Forest, North Central Arkansas. They are on the Arkansas River about 10 miles NW of Mountain View. This underground water system is one of the most phenomenal caves found of the century. In the upper caverns, the chambers and weird passages extend miles underground. The marble columns, beauty, and size of the formations found in these caverns are rival those of any other caverns open to the public in the United States.

HISTORY

Fatty burned reeds found in the east passage, carbon dated 880 A.D., indicate that Indians have known about Blanchard Springs caverns for at least 1000 years. . . . Early pioneers must have known about the natural entrance shortly after the settlement of the area in the 1800's. Legend is that a hunter following a deer trail on a rugged slope and there heard strange noises—a continuous roar like waves or something underground. Following the trail further, he saw an open mouth of the mountain. He approached and saw the long, low, dark opening of an underground stream. . . . Difficult entry, equipment, and inadequate equipment limited exploration. In the 1930's Willard H. Johnson, Forest Service Recreation Planner, entered the cave. Because he was concerned that the overhead was unstable, and insufficient light, he stopped near the natural entrance. . . . Shortly afterward, a trail was cut from the springs to the natural entrance. The caverns at that time were named "Half Mile Cave" because they were one-half mile from the springs. The springs, originating in the caverns as a swift underground stream, discharge about 1200 gallons of water per minute. The water is 64° F. July 58°. The springs were named after John Blanchard who owned a corn grits mill, powered by water stored behind a dam. World War II stopped a CCC restoration project of the mill. . . . From 1955-61, some spelunkers from West Helena, Arkansas, explored the cavern extensively. In December, 1955, they found an Indian skull and skeleton. Also during this period, other groups explored the caverns. The Forest Service began formulating plans in 1963 and in October 1965, actual construction began on a horizontal tunnel into the coral room.



U.S.D.

FOREST SUPERVISORS MEETING

OCTOBER
3-4-5 1967

United States
Department of
Agriculture



National Agricultural Library

OCTOBER
3-4-5 1992

FOREST SUPERVISORS MEETING

Blanchard Springs Caverns are located in the Ozark Mountains of North Central Arkansas. They are on the Sylamore Ranger District 15 miles NW of Mountain View. This underground wonderland is one of the most phenomenal cave finds of the century. In this rugged timber area, vast chambers and weird passages extend miles underground. The variety, uniqueness, beauty, and color of the formations found in these caverns will rival those of any other caverns open to the public in the United States.

HISTORY

Partly burned reeds found in the east passage, carbon dated 880 A.D., is an indication that Indians have known about Blanchard Springs caverns for at least 1080 years. . . . Early pioneers must have known about the natural entrance shortly after the settlement of the area in the 1800's. . . . Legend is that a hunter following a deer trail up a rugged draw suddenly heard strange noises—a continuous rumble that seemed to come from deep underground. Following the trail further, he saw an eerie gap in the side of the mountain. He approached and saw the deep hole and heard the roar of an underground stream. . . . Difficult entry, superstitions, and inadequate equipment limited exploration. In the 1930's Willard Hadley, a Forest Service Recreation Planner, entered the cave. Because of apprehension that the overhead was unstable, and insufficient lighting, he stayed near the natural entrance. . . . Shortly afterward, a trail was built from the springs to the natural entrance. The caverns at that time were named "Half Mile Cave" because they were one-half mile from the springs. The springs, originating in the caverns as a swift underground stream, discharge about 1200 gallons of water per minute. The water is a chilly 58°. The springs were named after John Blanchard who operated a corn grist mill, powered by water stored behind a dam. World War II stopped a CCC restoration project of the mill. . . . From 1955-61, three spelunkers from West Helena, Arkansas, explored the cavern extensively. In December, 1955 they found an Indian skull and skeleton. Also during this period, other groups explored the caverns. The Forest Service began formulating plans in 1963 and in October 1965, actual construction began on a horizontal tunnel into the coral room.



U.S.D.A., NAL

MAR 08 2005

CATALOGING PREP

PICTORIAL MAP

CAVERN VISITOR NEEDS

Blanchard Springs Caverns will become the hub of a wide range of recreational opportunities. As an attraction of national significance, the Caverns will draw visitors from all parts of the country. The Caverns are within a day's drive of 18 million people. There are 18 major population centers falling within a 450 mile radius of the Caverns . . . Private, Federal, and State recreational facilities will attract more people. Buffalo State Park — private developments including dude ranches and boat docks—and Corps of Engineers' projects, such as Bull Shoals Lake, Table Rock Lake, Norfork Lake, Greer's Ferry Lake, and the proposed Wolf Bayou Lake are within 4 hours drive of the Caverns. A Folk Culture Center is proposed at Mountain View. Buffalo River, known nationally as a "Float" stream, and the White River, a popular trout river, border the Sylamore Ranger District. These rivers provide a variety of outdoor recreational enjoyments. One-half million visitors are expected to come to the Caverns annually. Projections from a 1964 publication, "Travel In Arkansas", a peak weekend day would attract 5,700 visitors. Based on these estimates, visitors will need these facilities either on site or within easy driving to the area.

Motel Units
1400

Camp Units
500

Picnic Units
170

Restaurants
*900

Swimming Sites
*371

The Forest Service will provide these facilities:

Swimming Sites
*250

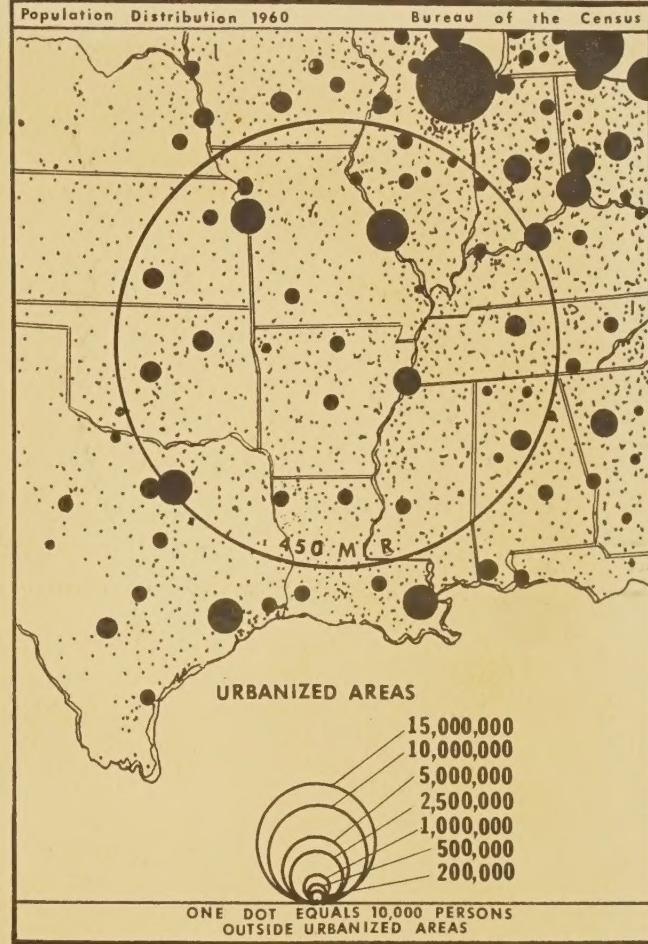
Camp Units
320

Picnic Units
216

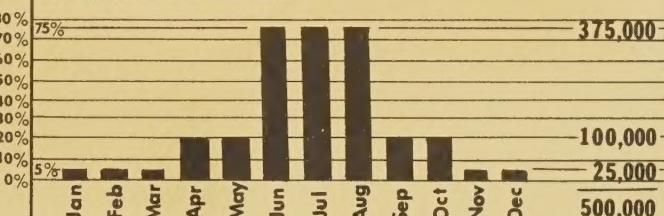
Cavern Tours
3

*Persons at one time

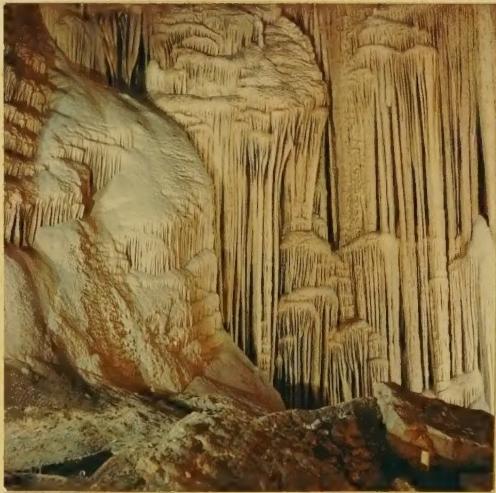
The Caverns and associated facilities will be developed in 5 phases.



BASED ON USE PERIODS, VISITS TO THE CAVERNS WOULD BE DISTRIBUTED AS FOLLOWS:



DEVELOPMENT PHASES



PHASE I

Those facilities required to open the Caverns to the public will be constructed in this phase. A Visitor Center, underground developments, and providing interpretative services are to be developed concurrently with Tour A — Cathedral and Coral rooms. Among the above ground needs to be developed at this time are camping and picnicking areas and motel accommodations.

PHASE III

This phase will allow for the expansion of camping and swimming facilities. Camping facilities will be developed at Landers Tract, Partee and Tarwater Springs; swimming facilities to be expanded at Shelter Cave, Mitchell Tract, and Old Chimney. Tour C—The Giant Titan, will be developed in this phase.

PHASE II

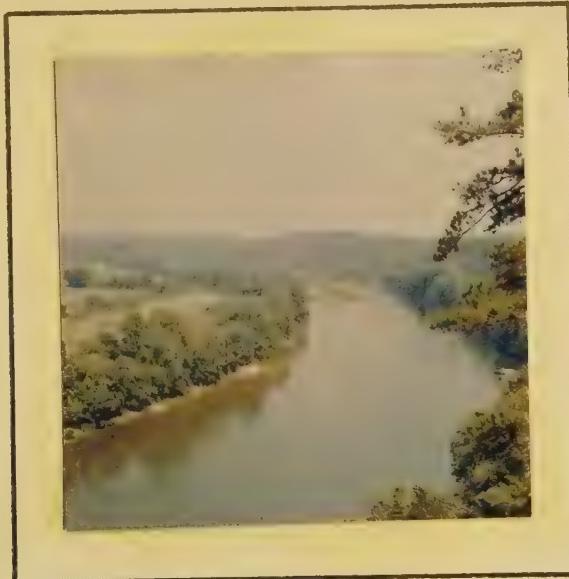
The facilities in this phase will be constructed simultaneously with the development of Tour B —the Giant Flowstone. Limited land acquisition will begin along the White & Buffalo Rivers. Expansion of camping and picnicking facilities in the Barkshed Recreation Area and construction of new roads and trails will take place in this phase.





PHASE IV

To be constructed in this phase is a 26 mile scenic drive beginning at Calico Rock, a small mountain town, that will pass vistas at City Rock and Cataract Falls enroute to Mountain View via Blanchard Springs Caverns. Conversion from camping to picnicking at Gunner Pool Recreation Area will take place during this phase of development.



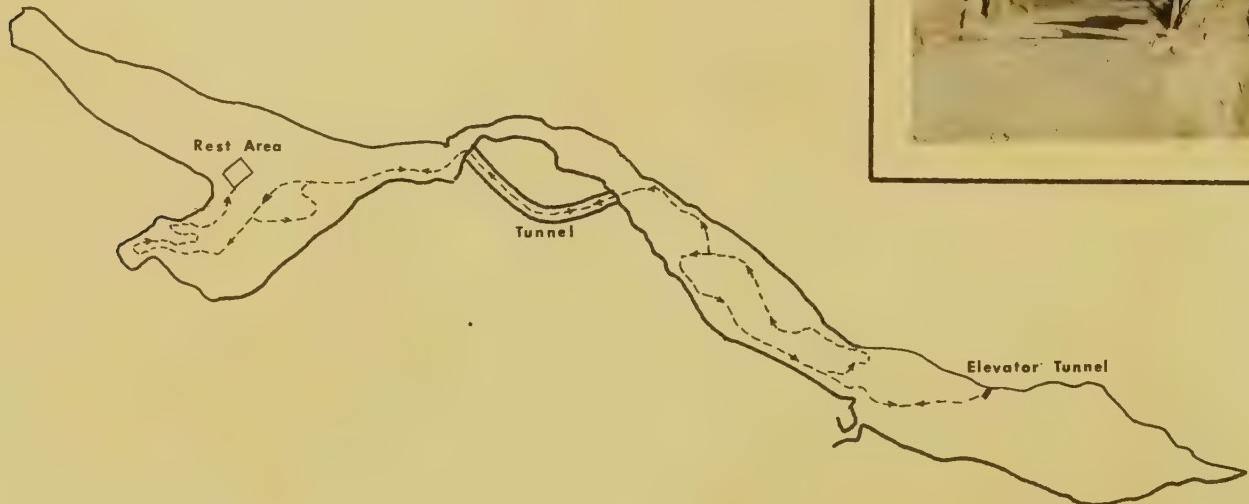
PHASE V

The needs of an expanding population will be met by providing quality camping on a mass scale. Roasting Ear Creek and Bee Hollow are to be developed for camping; White River sites will be developed for camping and other recreational uses as the recreation need dictates.

TOUR A—CATHEDRAL AND CORAL ROOMS

The Cathedral and Coral Rooms are the two main features in this tour. The gigantic Cathedral room is more than 3 football fields long and securely supported by white, rose, and gray colored giant columns extending 70' high to the ceiling. Along the walls are thin, drapery-like sheets of translucent calcite. The floor is forested with multi-colored giant stalagmites and the ceiling with odd twisted stalactites. The Coral Room contains eerie, blue-lit coral ponds with white rafts of lacy calcite and uniquely shaped spires. Spectacular formations, probably the most delicate and beautiful are found in this part of the Cavern.

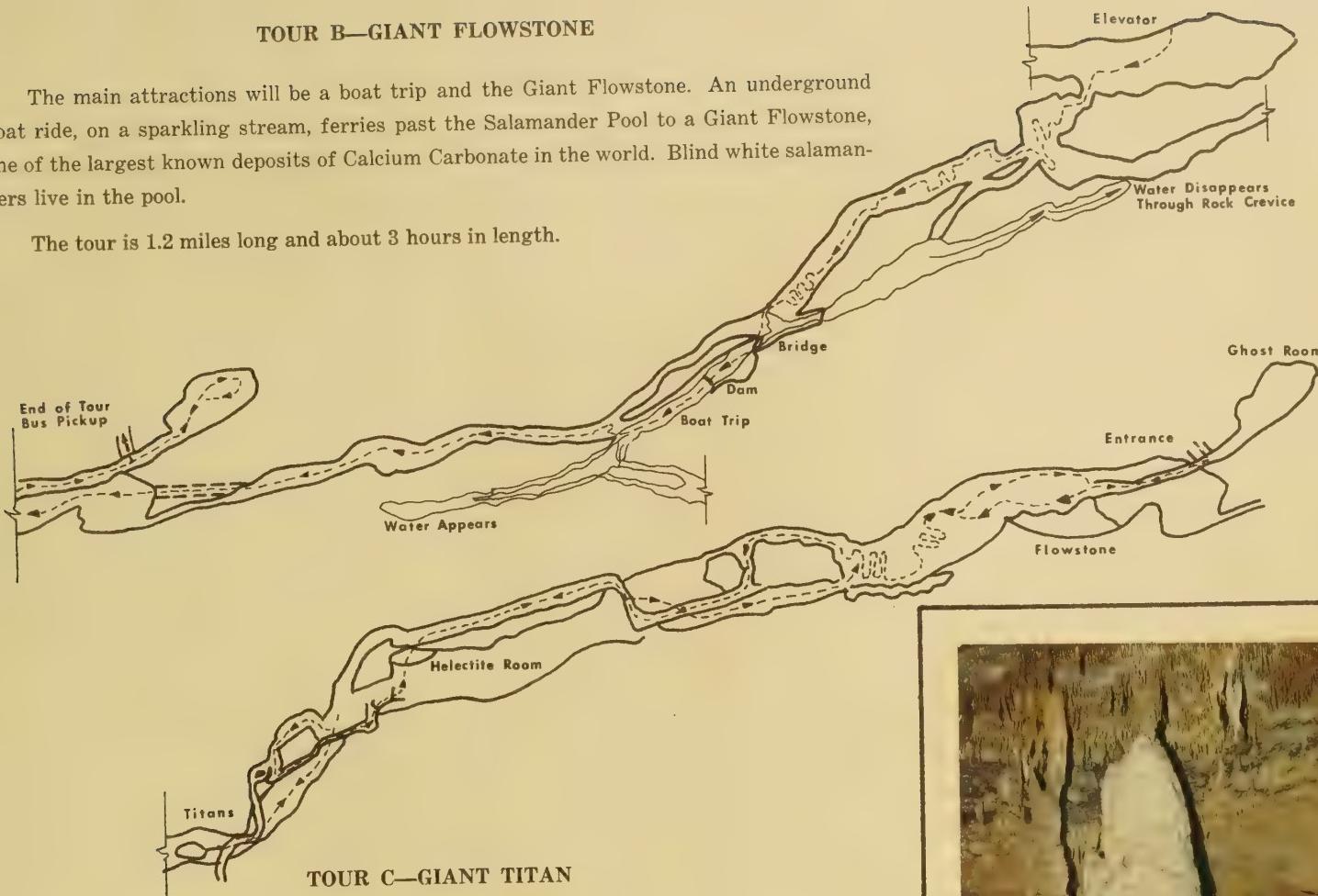
The tour is .7 mile long and 1½-2 hours in length.



TOUR B—GIANT FLOWSTONE

The main attractions will be a boat trip and the Giant Flowstone. An underground boat ride, on a sparkling stream, ferries past the Salamander Pool to a Giant Flowstone, one of the largest known deposits of Calcium Carbonate in the world. Blind white salamanders live in the pool.

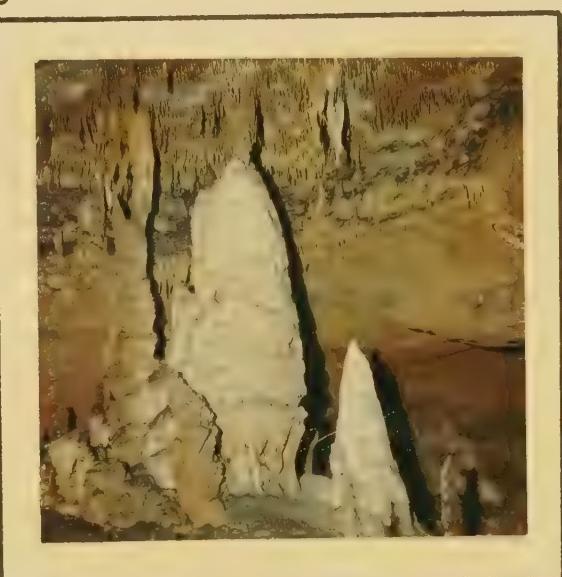
The tour is 1.2 miles long and about 3 hours in length.



TOUR C—GIANT TITAN

The fitting climax of a journey via the subterranean wonderland is a view of unsurpassed beauty, the room of the Giant Titans. Here you will see gigantic and glittering stalactites and stalagmites of different hues more than 200' tall, a startling contrast to the helictite room with its display of small, twisted calcite deposits.

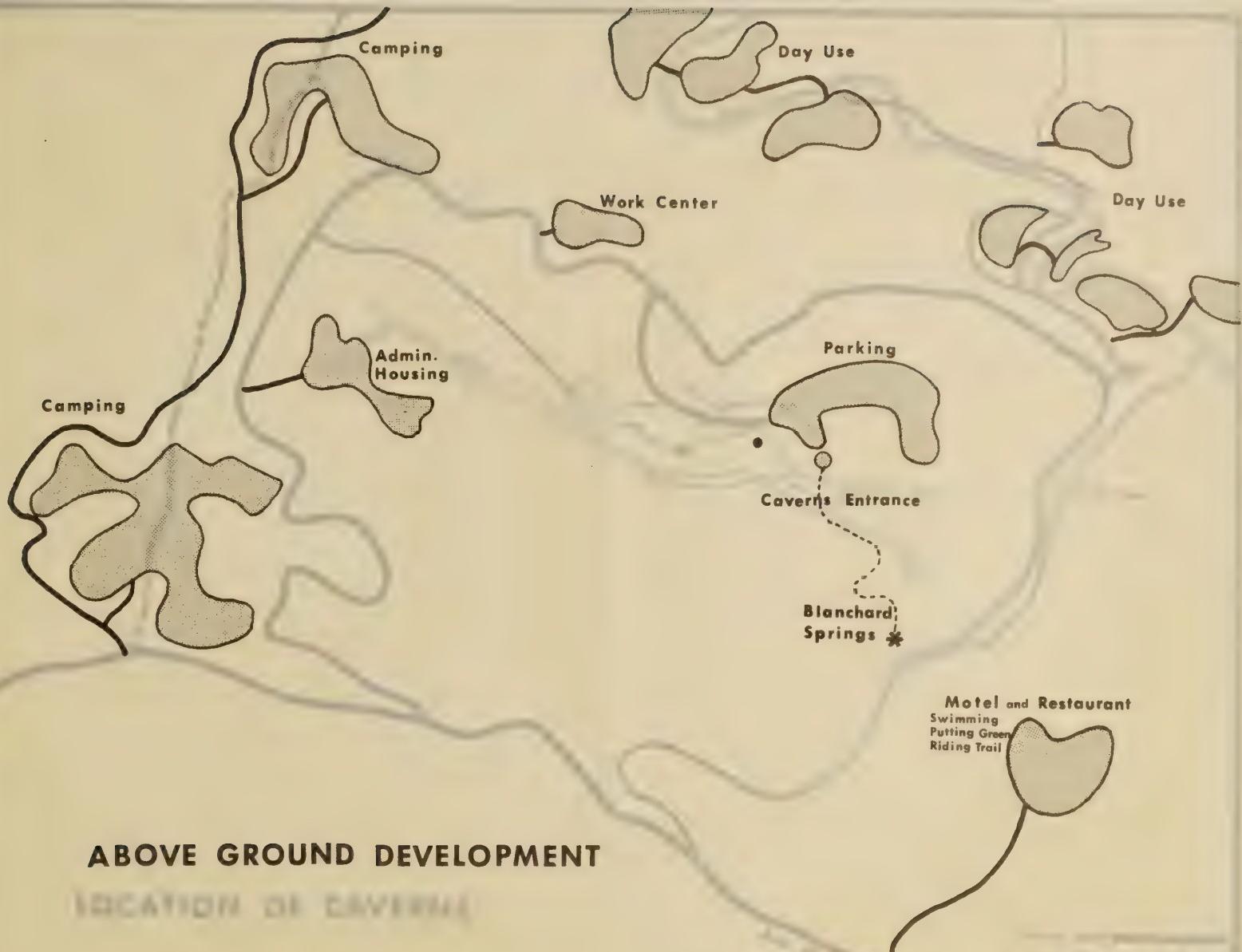
The tour is 1.4 miles long and about 3 hours in length.



PROGRESS

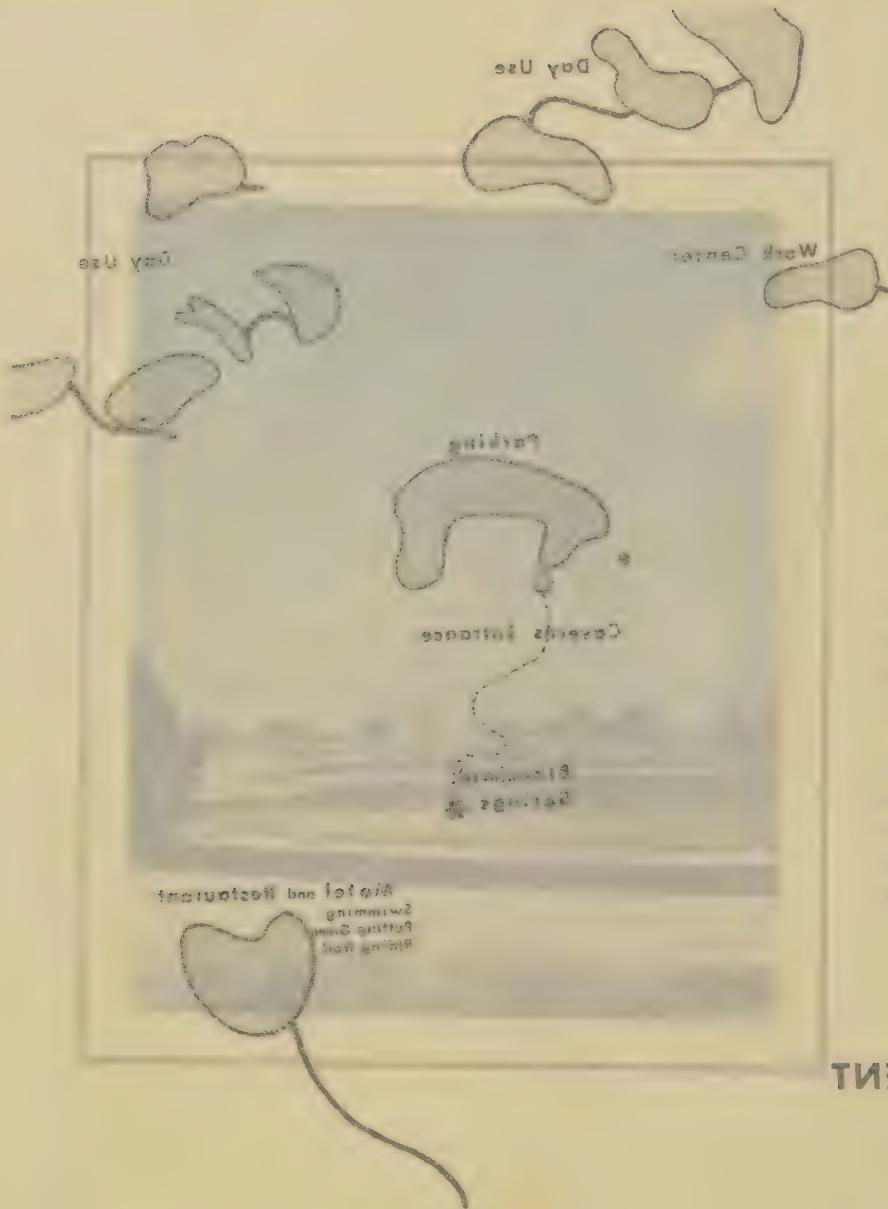


More than 4 miles of new access roads have been constructed. These roads have been paved. A 216' concrete lined elevator shaft which leads to a point near the massive Cathedral Room is now completed. Tourists will enter and leave the Caverns through this shaft in two 23-passenger elevators. Inside the cave, construction is underway on a network of stone-curbed trails in the Cathedral and Coral Rooms. A 270' connecting tunnel between Cathedral and Coral Rooms is completed. . . . A 300-car parking lot has been paved. . . . Great care is being taken to insure that the intricate beauty and natural environment of the caverns are preserved. Much of the work inside the caverns is done with hand tools to prevent possible damage to the delicate formations.

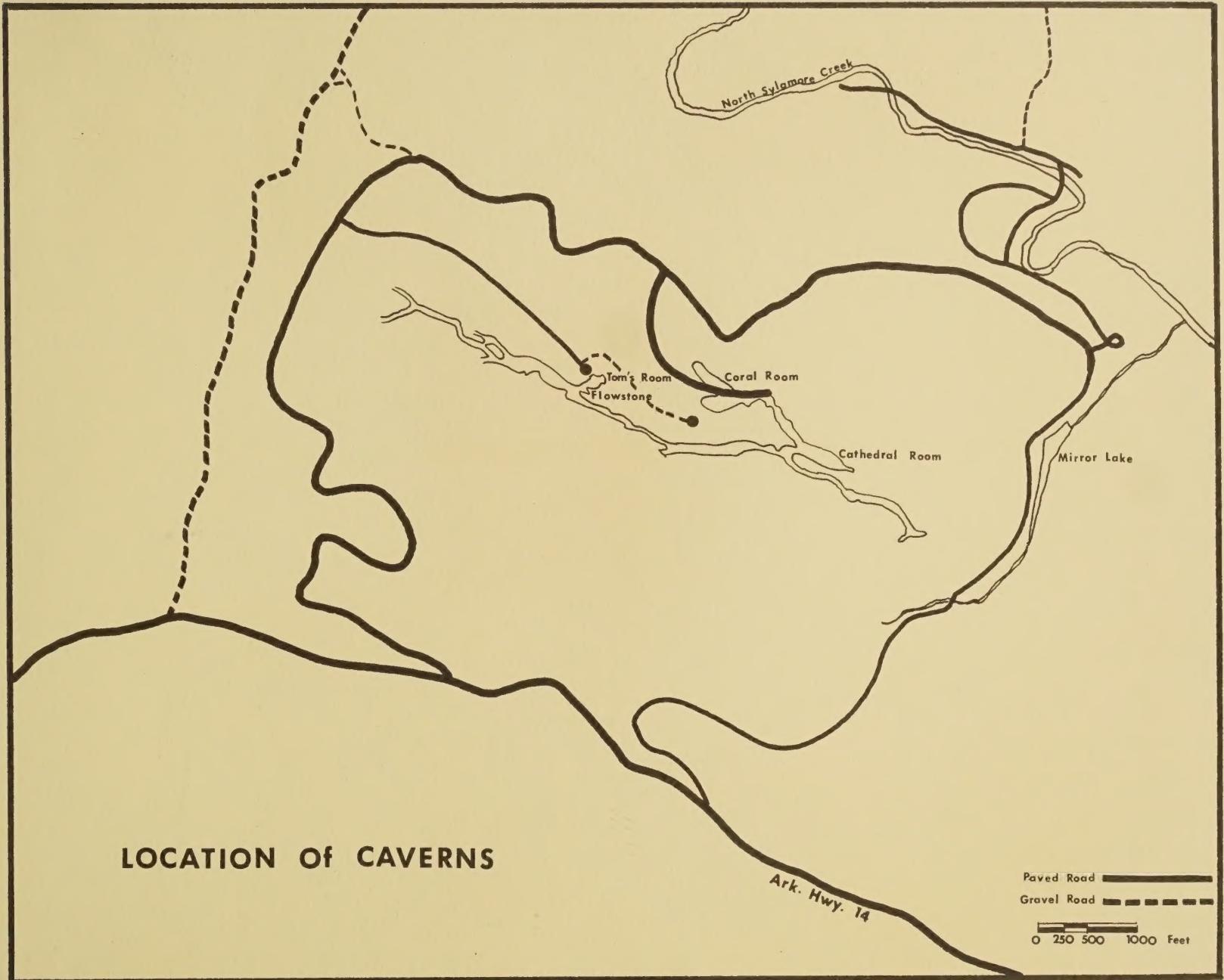


ABOVE GROUND DEVELOPMENT

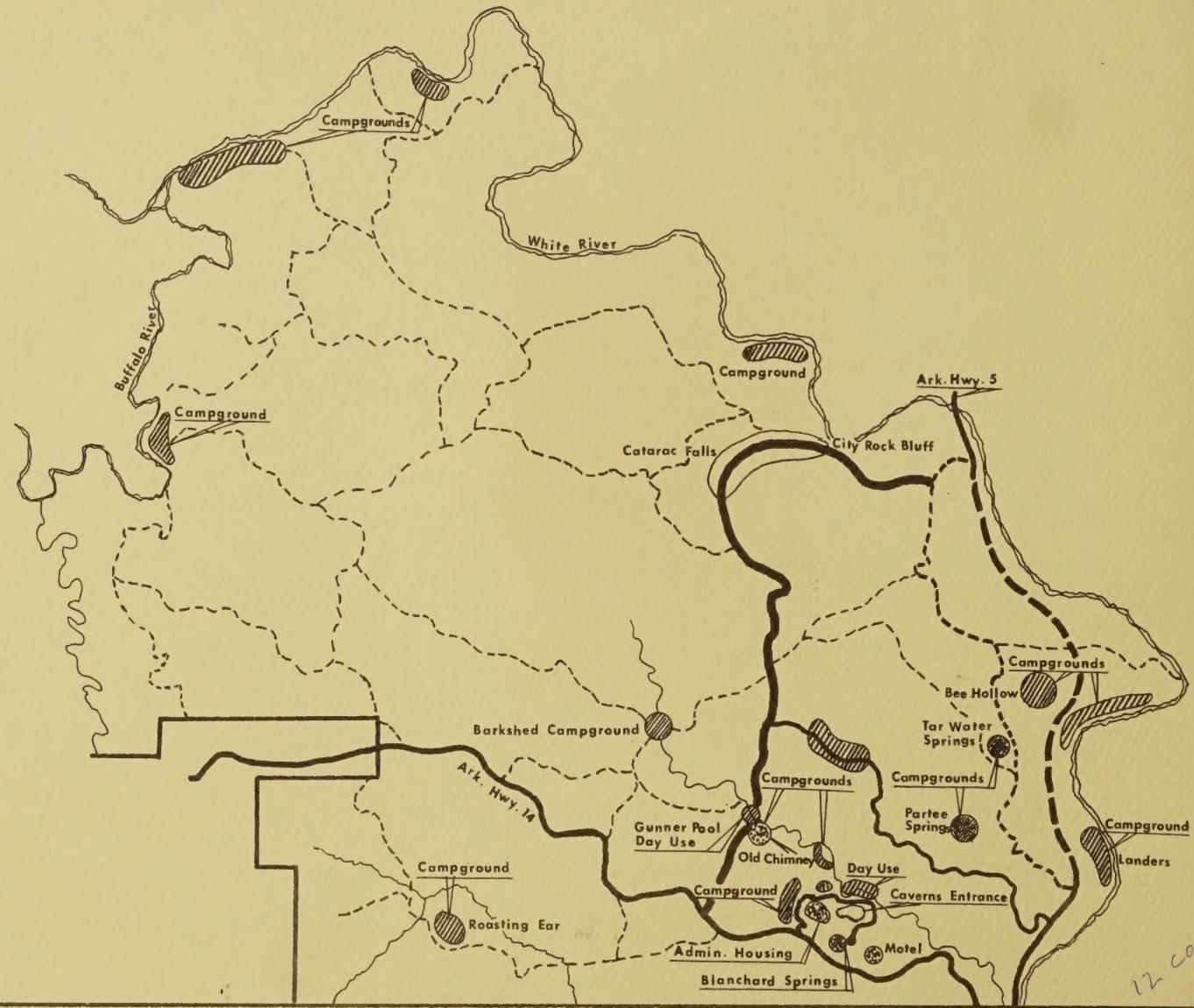
LOCATION OF CAVERNS



ABOVE GROUND DEVELOPMENT



BLANCHARD SPRINGS CAVERNS COMPLEX



FACTS AND FIGURES

GROSS ACREAGE	1,531,608
NET ACREAGE	1,109,312
RANGER DISTRICTS	9
JOB CORPS CENTERS	1

TIMBER: During Fiscal Year 1967—26 million board feet of Forest Products were sold having a stumpage value of \$506,442 and the "Cut" for the same period was 25 million board feet with a stumpage value of \$472,153. Fiscal Year 1967 accomplishments in other facets of Timber Management included: 5598 acres reforested by planting and direct seeding; timber stand improvement on 7211 acres and 3789 acres prepared as a seedbed for pine and hardwood seedlings. The forest has 477 acres of seed production areas and 58 superior trees.

WILDLIFE: 320 species of birds
28,000 White Tailed Deer
3600 Wild Turkey 250 Black Bear
A good population of small game
(Quail, Rabbits, Squirrel, Raccoons) 1265 Wildlife Ponds
500 Wildlife Openings

RECREATION: 44 Camp and Picnic Areas
529 Family Units
9 Swimming Sites 711,000 Visitor Days' Use—1966 1 Observation Site
.7 Miles Interpretive Trail
2 Scenic Areas

Blanchard Springs Caverns

Mt. Magazine—2830 Feet
(Highest point between the Rockies and Appalachians)

RANGE: 624 head of livestock now under permit. 17 grazing allotments under Range Management. Closure of the Forest to free-ranging hogs began in 1966. As of June 30, 1967, the hog population on forest declined from 6000 to about 400.

WATER: Watershed protection provided for rivers, lakes, streams, and creeks. Watershed units—83; Municipal watersheds—3.

ROADS: Over 1000 miles of road are maintained. 7257 linear feet of bridges and low water slabs have been built.

FIRE: 177 fires suppressed in 1966, 1409 acres burned over—137 fires per year average (1961-66). 68 incendiary fires in 1966.

ECONOMICS: Gross receipts fiscal year 1967—\$562,116; 1962-66 National Forest Receipts to Eighteen Counties—\$812,317.



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